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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000814

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [KNNP](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IAEA](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: PROPOSALS TO SHUT DOWN THE CRENN-K NUCLEAR REACTOR

REF: A. KINSHASA 798

[¶](#)B. KINSHASA 797

[¶](#)C. KINSHASA 796

Classified By: DCM TDougherty. Reasons 1.4 b,d,f.

[¶](#)1. (C) Econoff met June 7 with Professor Fortunat Lumu Badimabayi-Matu, the recently dismissed Director of the Kinshasa Nuclear Research Center (CRENN-K) and the DRC Atomic Energy Commission (CGEA). (Note: Per reftel A, Lumu was fired in March by the new Minister of Scientific Research, Sylvanus Mushi Bonane. End note.) Lumu discussed the possibility of removing the 138 nuclear fuel rods and 23 kg of nuclear waste from CREN-K. With a new government in place, Lumu said that the DRC would probably be willing to discuss the issue. Lumu reiterated the DRC's long-standing negotiating position that the U.S. could remove the waste if it built the DRC a new nuclear reactor. When told a new reactor was not an option, Lumu said that the new government might still agree if the U.S. were instead to build the DRC a particle accelerator, or to give CREN-K the parts needed to run the old reactor for ten years, after which the U.S. could dismantle the reactor and remove the waste.

[¶](#)2. (C) Econoff met on June 13 with Lumu's replacement, Professor Francois Lubala Toto. (Note: Lumu claimed Lubala, who was named to head CREN-K and the CGEA by Minister Mushi, is Mushi's cousin. End note.) Lubala agreed that now is a good time to re-open negotiations about removing the nuclear waste, given the changes in government, CREN-K, and CGEA. Unfortunately, Lubala had almost exactly the same negotiating position as Lumu. He said the U.S. could remove the waste if the U.S. built the DRC a new nuclear reactor. He then went so far as to say that under the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) nuclear non-proliferation agreement, which he noted the U.S. was a party to, host countries were obligated to recover nuclear waste. Lumu said the U.S. was thus "morally obligated" to pay for and remove the waste since it had built the reactor, and he was somewhat indignant that the U.S. had not already done so.

[¶](#)3. (C) In separate discussions, Jack Edlow of Edlow International Company met on June 16 with Kimbembe Mazunga, the Chief Advisor for Infrastructure and National Planning at the Presidency. (Note: Edlow had unsuccessfully sought to meet with President Kabilia. End note.) A "record of the meeting" between Mazunga and Edlow was signed by both parties. Text follows:

BEGIN TEXT: A meeting was held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo on Saturday June 16, 2007, between The Honorable Kimbembe Mazunga, Chief Advisor to the H.S. in

charge of Infrastructure and National Planning and Mr. Jack Edlow, President of Edlow International Company. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the situation of the Triga Reactor located at the University of Kinshasa and the potential return of the fuel to the United States. Mr. Edlow presented the previous file which included the Memorandum of Understanding signed in January 2001 as well as the agreed but unsigned contract from November 2001 as well as the invitation of H.E. The President to attend further discussions in Kinshasa also from 2001. Mr. Kimbembe described the current situation in the country and the desire of government to maintain an interest in nuclear technology. The parties have agreed that it could be in the best interest of the Governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the United States to renew the discussions. Accordingly, the parties have agreed to report the results of this meeting to respective governments and to await the decision of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo as to renew the invitation to attend discussions in Kinshasa. The parties will continue in contact over the next thirty (30) days. END TEXT.

¶4. (C) Comment: Post is aware of several discussions currently taking place regarding the shut-down of the CRENE-K reactor and the removal of its nuclear waste. It is inevitable in the DRC that different interlocutors will have different answers, though one constant will be their desire to get something for themselves in the process. In any case, a decision to close the reactor would only be made at the highest level -- meaning by the President. We believe the most useful strategy would be for the IAEA to approach the GDRC about the need to remove the waste and close the reactor. The USG (and apparently some European governments)

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could then express a willingness to assist, thereby removing any pretext that a lack of funding and expertise would prevent action by the Congolese. Considering some recent strains in relations between the Presidency and some European missions, demarches from Western embassies could prove counterproductive, and we therefore suggest an international body such as the IAEA serve as the initial intermediary.

¶5. (C) Comment cont'd: Despite reports from some European embassies in Kinshasa, the situation today is no more "urgent" or "critical" than it has been for many years. That said, there is no question that the Trigo Reactor should be shut down and its nuclear waste removed as soon as possible -- and that the danger of not doing so is very real. End comment.

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